

Zsombor Kristóf VINCZE: The jewel of the Holy Crown of Hungary, Fiume

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1. *Corpus separatum*

Act 30 of 1868 (the Croatian–Hungarian Compromise¹) §66 was one of the most sensitive points of this agreement, provoking several disputes between the negotiating delegations and the public opinion of the two countries. This paragraph separated the city and district of Fiume from the county of Fiume and subordinated it to the exclusive authority of the Hungarian Holy Crown as a '*corpus separatum*'. The Compromise did not contain any detailed provisions on this matter. It required the consensual decision of a *regnicolaris* comitee consisting of the two parties' parliamentary delegation and the delegates from the city of Fiume. The Nagodba made it their responsibility to define the rules on legislative and governmental matters that concerned the city's autonomy.

An interesting question is what Maria Theresa intended to express with the definition of '*corpus separatum*'. Furthermore, we should look whether Maria Theresa's idea from 1779 equals to the one found in the Croatian–Hungarian Compromise of 1868? We can only speculate, since there was no precise legal definition of this concept neither in 1779, but not even in 1868. I think that Viktor Jászi's thoughts are right on this issue. He clearly said that it could only mean that Fiume did not belong to Croatia.² This is a central question, in my opinion, that the name itself tried to solve. Due to the not entirely clear wording, the legal status of Fiume was disputed between the Croatian

¹ GOSZTONYI, Gergely: Horvát-Szlavónország helyzete a kiegyezések után [The situation in Croatia-Slavonia after the Compromise]. *Jogtörténeti Szemle [Legal History Review]*. 2014, no. 3., pp. 7–12.

² JÁSZI, Viktor: Fiume. *Husadik század [Twentieth century]*. 1900. no. 1, p. 181.

and Hungarian parties even after the Act 4 of 1807, which confirmed the settlement of 1779. The Hungarian side considered it to join the Holy Crown directly, while the Croats accepted its accession to the Crown – but only through Croatia.³

Regarding the disputed paragraph, a controversial legend or belief holds that §66 of the law passed by the parliaments of the two countries is not displayed in the same way, due to the subsequent change of the Hungarian side. Rauch Levin, as a Croatian–Slavonic and Dalmatian Ban-governor, solved the confusion between the Croatian and Hungarian texts quite simply by overriding the text of the law, thus bridging the difference between the two texts, which was that the Croatian law did not contain that Fiume belongs to the Hungarian crown, while the Hungarian version does. Prime Minister Gyula Andrassy allegedly granted the governor of Ban to do this after a hunt with Franz Joseph in Gödöllő.⁴ This is called the '*Fiume stain*', which appears in a Croatian article as a symbol of a high state-level counterfeiting, the collapse or retreat of the Croatian parliament and a complex, confusing situation in Fiume. The closure of the sabor resulted that Fiume fell into the hands of the Hungarians without hindrance, according to the article.⁵ Although, the story has not been verified by historians, it is really fascinating.⁶

It is worth briefly reviewing the history of Fiume, how the city's legal status developed before the Compromise. There is no need to emphasize that for every state, securing access to the sea is of great importance from an economic, commercial, but

³ ANDRÁSI, Dorotya: Fiume államjogi helyzetének rendezése és jelentősége a XIX. század második felében a jogforrások tükrében [Settlement and significance of the state law of Fiume in the 19th century in the light of legal sources]. *Jogtörténeti Szemle [Legal History Review]*. 2005, no. 1., p. 18.

⁴ RESS, Imre: Fiume jogállásának ellentmondásai [Contradictions of the legal status of Fiume]. *Életünk [Our lives]*. 2019, no. 9., pp. 43–51.

⁵ POLIĆ, Maja: "Riječka krpica" 1868. godine i uvjeti za njezino Naljepljivanje na Hrvatsko-Ugarsku Nagodbu [*"Fiume stain" 1868 and the conditions for its affixing to the Croatian-Hungarian settlement*]. <https://hrcak.srce.hr/> [Access on July 22, 2021].

⁶ JUHÁSZ, Imre: *Fiume. Egy közép-európai város és kikötő a hatalmi érdekek metszéspontjában [Fiume. A Central European city and port at the intersection of power interests]*. Budapest, 2020, Heraldika Kiadó, pp. 109–110.

also from a military point of view. In the Hungarian history, this aspiration became a reality during the reign of kings Ladislaus I and Coloman the Possessor of Books.

As the source material on the ancient and medieval history of the city does not appear to be very abundant, one of the first significant measures for the history of the city is that it was named Rijeka after a charter of King Béla IV dated 1260. In 1466, the town became the family property of the Habsburgs, and it was ruled by captains appointed by the emperor.⁷ In 1521, Charles and Ferdinand from the House of Habsburg divided the empire inherited from their grandfather in Worms. Consequently, Fiume, fell into Ferdinand's hands as an independent, '*self-governing territory*'.⁸ In 1530, King Ferdinand confirmed the city's statutory right, thus becoming a city-state endowed with legislative power.⁹ From here, we can certainly talk about the beginnings of the city's special status due to its privileges. In 1659, Leopold I donated a coat of arms and a flag to the city, at which time the city's motto appeared: '*Indeficienter*'.¹⁰ After the expulsion of the Turks, the city shared the fate of parts of the country which were not annexed back to the Holy Crown. The Hungarian estates demanded the reannexation of the city to the Holy Crown. These ambitions did not come to fruition for a long time.

During the years of enlightened absolutism, the rulers of Fiume, presumably under the influence of mercantilist economic policy, began to develop the city in an extraordinary way. So did Maria Theresa, her father Charles III, and her son Joseph II. Charles has the recognition that it is not enough to just develop the shipping and the port, the roads leading to it must be built and kept in order, therefore in his decree of 1719 he ensured the safety of the roads leading to the coast and the construction of

⁷ KRÁMLI, Mihály: Fiume 1848-ban [Fiume in 1848]. *Hajózástörténeti Közlemények [Shipping history publications]*. 2010, no. 1., www.kriegsmarine.hu/hk/km01001m.html [Access on October 30, 2021]

⁸ SZALAY, László: *Fiume a magyar országgyűlésen [Fiume in the Hungarian Parliament]*. Pest, 1861, Ráth Mór, p. 6.

⁹ Fiume. In: *Magyar Katolikus Lexikon [Hungarian Catholic Encyclopedia]*. <http://lexikon.katolikus.hu/F/Fiume.html> [Access on October 30, 2021]

¹⁰ KRÁMLI, *op. cit.*

new ones.¹¹ In the same year, the city and its rival, Trieste, were granted free port status from Charles, it meant that it could set the amount of trade duties itself.¹² In 1720, the town independently adopted the Pragmatica Sanctio. From 1745, the town was governed by the Oberste Commerz Intendenza, which administered all the ports, headed by the intendant, who supervised the work of the local, and thus, the vice-intendants of Fiume. The ports were classified in 1764, and among the ports with health offices, Trieste, Buccari, Zengg, Carlopag and Fiume were given the status of main ports.¹³ By that time, all the major ports were equipped with epidemiological, so the Martinschizza bribe institute was also built in the port of Fiume.¹⁴

The maritime decrees issued by Charles and Maria Theresa were edited into a summary work called the Politicum Edictum in 1774. In the same year, the Trieste shipping school was moved to Fiume. Until 1776, the city was under Habsburg rule. In 1776, Maria Theresa incorporated Fiume into Croatia and appointed its first governor, József Majláth, who took over control of the city on 21 October from Baron Ricci, a representative of the Intendenza in Trieste.¹⁵

2. The first “Hungarian-era”

The “Hungarian-era” in Fiume began in 1779, when the queen, at the request of the city and on the advice of her son, Joseph, connected Fiume to the Hungarian Holy Crown as a ‘*corpus separatum*’. The diploma of 1779 fixed the guarantees of municipal independence in four points. First, it guaranteed the city’s the territorial-administrative

¹¹ SZÉLINGER, Balázs: „Idegen és mégis magyar” A magyar Fiume története 1776–1914 [„Foreign and yet Hungarian” The history of the Hungarian Fiume]. *Limes*. 2002, no. 5. p. 29.

¹² Free port status from Charles III in 1719. SZÉLINGER, *op. cit.*, p. 29.; It could impose trade duties itself: ORDASI, Ágnes: Fiume. Az impériumváltások éveit [Fiume. Years of power changes]. *Rubicon*. 2020, no. 4., p. 20.

¹³ SZÉLINGER, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

¹⁴ JUHÁSZ, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

¹⁵ SZÉLINGER, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

separation. Moreover, the city could enact its statutes and laws independently, the city council was restored with the right to independent management. At last, patrician families were guaranteed statutory participation in the city council.¹⁶ However, this settlement only became law with the enactment of Act 4 of 1807, so the “first Hungarian-era” lasted only for two years.

During the Napoleonic Wars, the city came under French rule, as part of the newly organized Illyria, and then came to Austria through the Peace of Vienna, returning to the Holy Crown only in 1822, by decree of Francis I. However, it was not enacted until 1827, in the Act 13 of 1827, the Act on the Reclaiming of the Sava and the Hungarian Coast. This achieved the goal of Fiume, restoring the pre-French state.¹⁷

The first famous governor was József Ürményi, whose first large-scale port investment took place during his reign between 1823 and 1837, at the expense of the Hungarian state, after the developing years of enlightened absolutism.¹⁸ The Royal Maritime High School was set up under Ürményi’s government, which provided commercial vocational training in the city. During the reform era in Hungary, Fiume was present in the diets through its representatives, where it supported the opposition’s reform proposals. The general development of the reform era did not escape Fiume, the city underwent significant infrastructural development. The discussion between Kossuth and Széchenyi on how to involve Fiume and the coast in the country’s circulation and trade was well known. Széchenyi’s position emerged victorious from the debate, thus connecting Fiume directly to Pest.¹⁹

The beneficial effects of the April laws did not escape Fiume either, but it is regrettable that they could not be applied. The Act 27 of 1848 recognized Fiume and

¹⁶ ANDRÁSI, Dorottya: A Fiuméra vonatkozó autonómia terjedelme és intézményei az 1868-as magyar-horvát kiegyezést követő években. (1868-1883) [The scope and institutions of the autonomy of Fiume in the years following the Hungarian-Croatian Compromise Act of 1868. (1868-1883)]. *Közép-Európai Közlemények [Central European publications]*. 2014, no. 3–4., pp. 145–146.

¹⁷ JUHÁSZ, *op. cit.*, pp. 57–58.

¹⁸ Fiume was also developed at the expense of other nearby ports, as only Fiume had a significant supply of fresh water, which is essential for both the port and the emerging industry. SZÉLINGER, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

¹⁹ JUHÁSZ, *op. cit.*, pp. 68–72.

Szádrév (Buccari) as a legislature under the governor of Fiume. Furthermore, a law was enacted on the right to vote and on the election of district judges. Recruitment was not compulsory for Fiume, thus facilitating the development of trade and shipping.²⁰ During the Revolution and War of Independence of 1848, Fiume organized national guards to support the Hungarian forces. It is important to note that their command language was Italian because of the Italian majority involved. At the behest of the illegally appointed Croatian Ban Jellacic, imperial troops, together with the Croatian insurgent forces, occupied the city. However, the intentions of the Croats and the emperor with the revolution, in the first months, were not clear. Though, the idea of one of the pioneers of Illyrianism, Ljudevit Gaj, that the Croats should side with the ruler in the revolution against the Hungarians was ominous, which was evidenced by Jellacic's later movements in August. By the time there was no doubt about the ruler's increasingly aggressive reaction and his total rejection of the revolution. It is interesting that the independent Hungarian government also tried to set up the Hungarian Navy, but this business was not successful.²¹

On 31 August 1848, these squadrons would have been meant to defend Fiume from the invading imperial troops, and the Leopold Regiment, a well-armed garrison consisting mainly of Croats, who, however, did not accept any instructions from the Hungarian government or governor. Realizing the severity of the situation, Governor Erdődy chose to give up the city without bloodshed. In the words of Imre Juhász, this period can also be called an "*ex lex*" period, because the line of constitutional provisions was interrupted not just by the April laws, but also with the provisions of the uncrowned Franz Joseph.²²

3. "*Ex lex-era*"

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 76–77.

²¹ SZÉLINGER, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

²² JUHÁSZ, *op. cit.*, pp. 83–84.

According to the provisions of the March Constitution, Franz Joseph annexed the coastal region, „Tengermellék” and Fiume (Rijeka) to Croatia in addition to several territories in October 1849.²³ These changes were seen as a violation of the city’s autonomy by the Italian majority, as the city lost its autonomy very abruptly. Its territory was occupied by a Croatian military regiment and the Croatian administration was introduced immediately. The city was governed from Zagreb, and its maritime administration by the Imperial Maritime Authority of Trieste, which did not want to develop Fiume over Trieste.²⁴ In 1861, the city’s representative body requested that the city be annexed to Hungary. Quite a lot of pressure came from Fiume to the ruler, parades and demonstrations were held to provide reannexation, even poems were written, which demanded their autonomy and the Hungarian authority that ensured this. Interestingly, in the regular sabor elections held in the same year, 840 of the 870 votes cast were the word ‘nobody’.²⁵ This boycott clearly indicates the position that Fiume did not see its autonomy guaranteed under Croatian rule. By the way, the Croatian plan with the city was that it would be the seat of a newly formed county. But in the meantime, the previously also torn-off Muraköz (Medimurje), together with several areas suffering a similar fate, was reannexed to Hungary, so the hopes of Fiume could gain new strength.

The series of debates between the Hungarian, Fiumeian and Croatian parties, which took place even on the floors of the Hungarian Parliament, played an important role regarding the development of the city’s autonomy. The debates focused on the issue of judicial authority over Fiume. The Croats argued that the Zagreb Tribunal should have judicial power over the city. However, Fiume considered the Captain’s Chair of

²³ KÉPESSY, Imre: A monarchikus diktatúra (az önkényuralom és provizórium kora) [The monarchical dictatorship (the age of authoritarianism and the provizory)]. In: MEZEY, Barna – GOSZTONYI, Gergely (eds.): *Magyar alkotmánytörténet [Hungarian constitutional history]*. Budapest, 2020, Osiris Kiadó, pp. 302–309.

²⁴ SZÉLINGER, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

²⁵ JUHÁSZ, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

Fiume²⁶ to be suitable for this task. The debate eventually concluded in the favor of the wishes of Fiume since the city did not belong to the county system. Even prior 1848, the civil proceedings of Fiumeians began before the Municipal and District Courts of Judges and Directors, and then, they continued in the Captain's Chair, and from there the case could end directly on the Table of Septemvirs. The criminal lawsuits began in the Captain's Chair and continued before the Royal Table, with the possibility of legal redress in front of the Table of Septemvirs.²⁷

The Austro–Hungarian Compromise Act of 1867 stated that the maritime administration would come under the authority of the transport ministers, thus making Hungarian shipping independent. These provisions strengthened the Hungarian influence in the city.²⁸ Furthermore, the city of Fiume was also represented at the coronation of Franz Joseph as Hungarian king in 1867, and it also sent land to the coronation hill from under the city's tower.²⁹

4. The second “Hungarian-era”

Shortly afterwards, the city rejoined the Holy Crown as a '*corpus separatum*' according to the Croatian–Hungarian Compromise Act. Furthermore, the city regained its autonomy. However, the actual accession of Fiume had to wait until 1870, when a royal memorandum abolished the royal commission and ordered a provisory state to settle the dispute between the Croatian opposition and the Hungarian parliament, which was aimed at settling the regulations left open in §66. With the order of a provisory state the position of Royal Commissioner Ede Cseh was terminated and Jr. Count József Zichy took over Fiume as governor. Consequently, he became the head of the maritime administration in the entire Hungarian Coastal Region, Tengermellék. The provisory

²⁶ Its judges were elected by the Captain's Council.

²⁷ JUHÁSZ, *op. cit.*, pp. 60–64.

²⁸ SZÉLINGER, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

²⁹ JUHÁSZ, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

state also provided Croatian control over the county of Fiume, so while the city and district of Fiume were returned to Hungarian rule, the county of Fiume was under Croatian rule.³⁰

It was the subject of recurring discussions whether Fiume would send representatives to the Croatian Parliament and whether it could invite Fiume's representatives at all. This issue would appear to have been decided based on the Croatian–Hungarian Compromise Act, except that neither the Act nor the Provisional Order settled every issue.³¹ For this reason, the Hungarian side did not find it problematic either, even though the Hungarian position on the affiliation of Fiume was clear, if during the provisional period the Croatian side would invite the representatives of Fiume to its own parliament. In practice, this was not a problem anyway, as Fiume did not send representatives there, despite the invitation.³²

In 1872, the Statute of the Rights and Obligations of Fiume was completed.³³ Its significance rooted in the fact that in the absence of legal regulation, this document defined the framework for the city's autonomy. It could only be amended by an affirmative vote of a two-thirds majority of the Fiume's representatives. The city made an inscription for the abolition of the provision and a legal settlement in 1881, based on which the House of Representatives instructed the government to act. Still, the matter was postponed to the next session of the Parliament.³⁴

The diversity of legal norms in force in the city is also interesting. In the late 19th Century, the Civil Code of Austria had a prominent place among the legislation in force, but there were applicable laws even from the French times. In addition, we could find many Hungarian legal acts in use. For this reason, the statement in the Statute that its provisions cannot contradict laws takes on a different meaning, so this must be

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 120–122.

³¹ GOSZTONYI, Gergely: Croatia-Slavonia's situation after the reconciliations. *Cahiers poitevins d'Histoire du droit - Septième Cahiers, Tome 7*. 2016, pp. 129–135.

³² JÁSZI, Viktor: Fiume. *Huszdik Század [Twentieth Century]*. 1900, no. 1., p. 173.

³³ ORDASI, Ágnes: Fiume. Magyarország tengeri kapuja [Fiume. Hungary's gate to the sea]. *Rubicon*, 2018, no. 3–4., p. 20.

³⁴ JUHÁSZ, *op. cit.*, pp. 120–122., 130–131.

understood in the context of the apparently diverse legal system in Fiume. It was debated, how the laws passed by the Hungarian Parliament came into force in Fiume. The subject of the debate was whether the laws enacted by the Hungarian Parliament enter into force *ipso facto* or based on a separate enacting provision, or whether the consent of Fiume is required for this, case-by-case. These disputes stemmed in part from the fact that the government was given the power delegated to it by the agreement of the Croatian and Hungarian parliaments. There were some who argued that the Parliament sits "above" the government, so it can enact laws that come into force *ipso facto* in Fiume, without the need for special provisions. In practice, for example, in the case of Act 5 of 1878, i.e. the Csemegi Code, this was done in such a way, that the law implementing the Code authorized the Minister of Justice to give effect to the Criminal Code in Fiume by a separate decree. The situation was similar in the case of the Bankruptcy Act of 1881. To better suit the legal provisions to the local conditions, the necessary changes could be made by the Minister of Justice in his enacting decree. However, when the subject of the regulation was specifically Fiume, the 'Fiume paragraph' was logically omitted, without which the provision came into force, such the Act 37 of 1916 on the Royal Hungarian State Police in Fiume. In similar cases, no separate act of enforcement was required.³⁵

Fiume's rights differed from municipalities on three essential points. First, the lack of virilism in the election of the representative body. Second, the Administrative Commission was not set up in Fiume until 1897, which was an extended hand of the government in the municipalities. A third important difference is that the governor's powers were substantially narrower than those of a lord-lieutenant.³⁶

The Hungarian state was represented in Fiume by a governor nominated by the Prime Minister and appointed by the king. The Hungarian government exercised its administrative rights essentially through the governor. Its powers were like those of the lord-lieutenant. Still, they were constrained in many respects by the city's self-

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 132–137.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

government. He had the right to speak at the meetings of the representative body (*Rappresentanza di Fiume*, which served as a local legislative committee and consisted of 50 members from the city and 6 sub-municipals), to review its decisions, and to submit local regulations to the ministry for approval. Where appropriate, he could temporarily suspend the implementation of decisions of the representative body if they conflicted with the law, the statute, or the state interest. Communication between the government and the city ran through his person. The governor acted also as the president of the Maritime Authority of Fiume, so he was responsible for the city's maritime administration. Moreover, his right of supervision and control extended to the entire Croatian-Hungarian coast. This role can also be deduced from the name of the position, as the exact name of the title was the royal governor of Fiume and the Croatian-Hungarian coast. Members of such famous Hungarian noble families as Count József Zichy or the grandson of Lajos Batthyány (the prime minister and martyr of the first responsible Hungarian government from an ancient noble family) also joined the post.³⁷

The other important position in the city belonged to the mayor, the *podesta*, elected by the council from among its own members. This name has been in use since 1872. Before that, the city was ruled by city judges, vice-captains, borgomasters, local government presidents.³⁸ The approval of the monarch, governor, and central government was also required for the *podesta* to become operational. His powers were like those of the mayor of Budapest.³⁹ With the majority support of the representative body, the *podestá* could decrees, impose taxes and fees, and decide on major investments.⁴⁰ He was the chairman of the representative body. If he considered any decision of the representative body to be crossing the interests of the state, the constitution, laws, or local government regulations, he had the right and duty to suspend its implementation and seek the opinion of the governor. The representative

³⁷ ORDASI 2018, *op. cit.*, pp. 3–4., 162–163.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

³⁹ ORDASI 2020, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

body could appeal to the government against the governor's decision. Only the government was entitled to initiate disciplinary proceedings against the mayor, on his own initiative or on the initiative of the representative body.⁴¹ There was also an example for the representative body to withdraw confidence from a *podestá* during the years of World War I, because of a decision it made without consulting with them.⁴²

The *Rappresentanza di Fiume* was the elected body of the city, and it had a strong influence on the city administration. It consisted of 56 elected representatives. However, this body could be disbanded at any time by the Hungarian government, which had to call a new election within four weeks from the dissolution. The condition for active suffrage was the ability to read and write and the right to participate in the Hungarian parliamentary elections. The condition for passive suffrage was the age of twenty-four and two years of local housing. Under §82 of the Statute, the representative body had the right to speak out against government decrees that were contrary to the autonomy of the city, but this did not mean that if the government had persisted in its determination, it should not have been implemented.⁴³

The city council served as the main body of the city administration. It operated under the supervision and direction of the mayor. It was led by the chairman of the council, and its number was determined by the representative body. Its members were appointed for life if they had the required qualifications. The Council had six departments: the Internal Council, the Police Department, the Architecture Department, the City Audit Office, the City Tax Office, and the Health Department. Their work was overseen by permanent committees.⁴⁴

Fiume could send an elected representative to the House of Representatives of the Hungarian Parliament, and she was represented in the Upper House through the governor. Interestingly, Fiume was able to send representatives to the Croatian

⁴¹ JUHÁSZ, *op. cit.*, pp. 128–129.

⁴² ORDASI 2018, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

⁴³ JUHÁSZ, *op. cit.*, pp. 127–128.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

Provincial Assembly after 1868, but this has not happened, since this would have meant recognition of Croatian territorial claims.⁴⁵

An important question is why Fiume, a city with an Italian majority and a significant Croatian population, was interested in the accession to the Holy Crown, even though its Hungarian population never reached 20 percent of the city's population (in 1910, the proportion of those who could speak Hungarian 21.5%, while 13% by nationality⁴⁶). It is a special phenomenon and probably resulted from the autonomy and multi-ethnic nature of the city, the so-called, fiumean consciousness (*'fiumanotudat'*). Perhaps this phenomenon also indicates that Fiume cannot be clearly called Croatian, Italian or Hungarian. It also indicates the need why the city of Fiume has nurtured towards autonomy. The protection of *'fiumanotudat'* and the economic interest were seen by the city in its accession to the Holy Crown. Riccardo Zanella, a politician from Fiume and Member of Parliament, gives an insight into this with his *'Fiat lux!'* pamphlet. Approaching Italy would not have paid off financially, as he said Italy could not maintain or even develop its own ports. Austria has always preferred Trieste over Fiume, so this was not a viable option either. According to Zanella, Croatia also struggled to maintain itself, so it remained close to Hungary.⁴⁷ Fiume could only expect the Hungarians to represent the interests of the city effectively and to develop its infrastructure. These ambitions have paid off, since huge developments began in Fiume in the last third of the 19th century. Until the First World War, Hungary spent 60 million gold crowns on the city, the port and the factories that served it. In 1873, the Fiume–Budapest railway line was handed over, connecting the city to the Hungarian commercial circulation. With this, the city's trade has taken on a new level, becoming a

⁴⁵ ORDASI, Ágnes: Modellváltások a fiumei kormányzás feladat-és hatásköreinek meghatározásában – Centralizációs stratégiák Fiumében [*Model changes in the definition of the task and powers of the Fiume Governorate-Centralization strategies in Fiume*]. Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Somogy Megyei Levéltára. 2018.

http://mnl.gov.hu/mnl/sml/fiumei_es_magyar_horvat_tengerparti_kiralyi_kormanyzo_iratainak_repertoriuma [Access on October 30, 2021].

⁴⁶ SZÉLINGER, *op. cit.*, pp. 41–42.

⁴⁷ ORDASI 2018, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

place to load goods from different parts of the country. It is no wonder, that the citizens and merchants of Fiume saw, among other things, the possibility of their financial prosperity in joining the Hungarian Holy Crown.

The Royal Hungarian Maritime Authority was established in 1870, so the large-scale development of the port took place, within the framework of which the huge port and service units, breakwaters, quays, and factories were built, which still serve the city to this day.⁴⁸ The first Hungarian state-owned company, Adria–Hungarian Maritime Navigation Co., was established in 1881. In its heyday, this company handled traffic to all major ports around the world.⁴⁹ Under the ministry of Gábor Baross (1886–1889), significant developments also took place, both in terms of trade and the port, for example, the construction of the Baross port. Shipbuilding in Fiume began in 1905, courtesy of Danubius Ship and Machine Factory. In 1872 the total turnover of the port was 23 million crowns, while at the end of the period, in 1913, 478 million crowns, so more than twenty times the amount in 1872.⁵⁰ Among the Monarchy's Tegethoff-class battleships from World War I, the largest Hungarian warship, the SMS Szent István, was built here, which also praises the work of the Ganz–Danubius Ship and Machine Factory.

This period perhaps rightly called "Hungarian-era" (1868–1918), ended at the end of World War I, as did the Croatian–Hungarian state union. In the case of Fiume, this can be linked to the departure of the last governor, Zoltán Jekelfalussy, on October 28–29 1918, during the night. However, the prior was followed by several symbolic events that marked the end of Hungarian authority in the city. In Croatian–Hungarian relations, the Zagreb National Assembly declared the dissolution of the state union on 29 October 1918, and its accession to the emerging South Slavic state.

5. Conclusion

⁴⁸ SZÉLINGER, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 36–38.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 38–40.

As can be seen from the above, Fiume has a special place in Hungarian history. Due to its special situation, the fact that it was on the border of the interests of several states, it had to maneuver carefully towards the enforcement of his interests and autonomy. In these circumstances, it can be said that, with a few exceptions, the "Hungarian eras" brought prosperity to Fiume, so we can be proud that the Hungarian authority contributed greatly to the development of this city.